



From Chaos to Order – How Shared Drive Analysis Helped a Team Regain Control of Their Data

The UA Exploration Team used shared drive analysis services to improve efficiency of data management and reduce maintenance costs.

“Where are those files and why can’t I find them when I need them?”

Our shared drive contains over 300,000 files. What are these files and do we really need them all?”

These were questions frequently asked by the UA Exploration Team based in Houston, Texas.

Recognizing the Issue

In 2010, an Onshore Exploration Healthcheck indicated that shared drives be reviewed for existence of data files that would be better stored on corporate repositories for perpetuation and easy accessibility. The shared drives were found to be a mess of duplicates and poorly organized files. A cleanup order was driven by UAX leadership to help identify and organize their data files as well as find a solution for maintaining the integrity of their shared drive in the future.

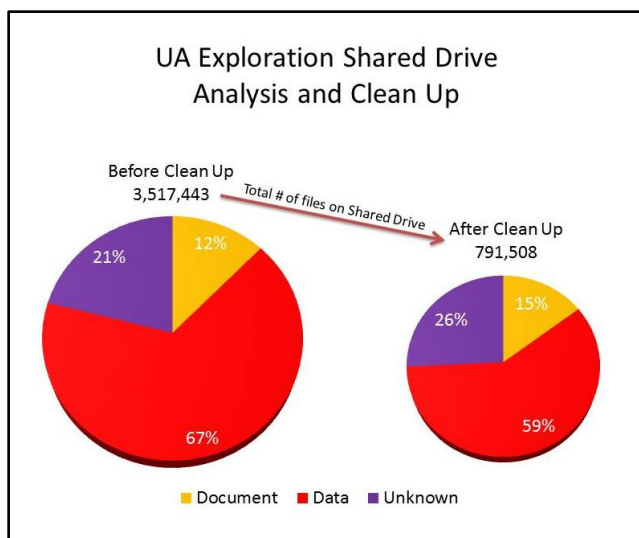
The Healthcheck also showed that team members were spending 20-40% of their time on data management tasks, and that each team was operating independently, thereby creating a barrier to standard practice and easy staff movement.

SWAT to the Rescue

To tackle this task, UAX leadership enlisted a team of I&D staff to identify the data on the shared drives. By working with the exploration teams and electronically crawling the drives, the I&D team was able to collect relevant metadata about the files to help identify the types of data contained within. The team consisted of 3 file analyst and a project manager. This team became known as the Shared Drive Wellness Assessment Team or “SWAT”.

After investigating and analyzing the data on the shared drives, SWAT was able to impact the optimization and shared usage of the data by:

- creating and implementing standards for the structure and management of the project shared environments
- making recommendations to optimize support, increase data sharing and minimize the cumbersome data transfer routines
- defining key workflows to populate the team data systems, focusing on optimization of data search, selection, and extraction.



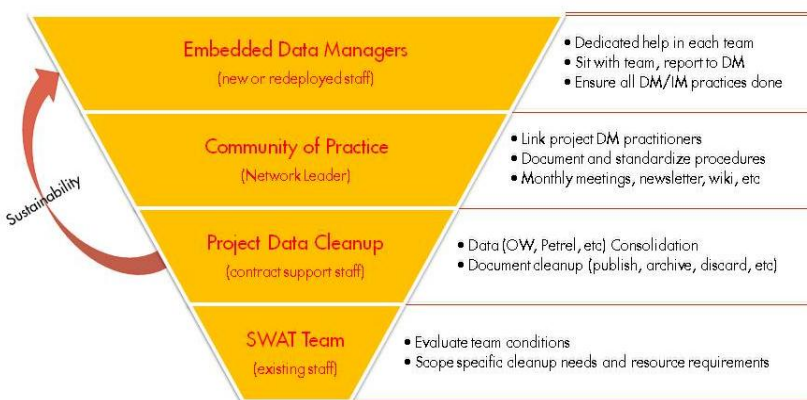


The Proof is in the results

The analysis and clean-up has resulted in a reduction of the used space on the shared drive and deletion of duplicate files. They were also able to relocate valuable data files to the proper corporate repositories.

The project proved that standardization of practices between teams can improve efficiency of data management within teams and yield easier integration across businesses. It was also learned that, after the cleanup, professionals spent less time on data management tasks.

Not only has this process helped increase team productivity, but the UAX team now has a lower cost in maintaining their shared drive and can more easily locate their valuable data.



As a result of the project, it was determined that business value would be added by embedding Technical Data Managers in the teams to help maintain data integrity.

Maintenance Mode

While the project is already yielding positive outcomes, the work still continues on maintaining the shared drive in order to keep it clean and organized. A shared drive crawler runs once a month to gather information on the current status of the drive. The team receives Information Quality reports built with a tool called Information Quality Metrics (IQM) measuring the team's data and document business rules. The embedded Data Manager uses the IQM results and works with the team to keep the shared drive clean.

What they did

- The business identified repositories containing important data that needed to be cleaned up.
- They focused on unstructured document and data files on project drives.
- They enlisted the SWAT team to automate collection of metadata in the files.
- SWAT used visualization of metadata to understand the types of files that existed, where they were located and who owned them.
- They introduced specific data management roles to maintain their shared drive data integrity.
- Standardized their data management practices across the business.

“This project is a fantastic example of Shell’s Information Management and Data Management teams working together to tackle the unstructured data problems,” says Karl Fleischmann, Manager - UA Data Management.